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Acting Director / Commissioner of Health

Obesity Data Brief



Francis G. Slay
Mayor

City of St. Louis Department of Health
Center for Health Information, Planning, and Research

March, 2016
314.657.1514

City of St. Louis Obesity Surveillance

This is the first City-wide assessment of overweight and obesity rates in St. Louis. The City of St. Louis Department of Health (DOH) established baseline overweight and obesity prevalence rates from nearly 172,000 driver's license records from the Missouri Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Mayor Francis Slay identified a five percent reduction in obesity by 2018 as a key goal in his Sustainability Action Agenda for the City of St. Louis. In response, the DOH developed and released the City's Obesity Plan in May 2014. This brief describes the baseline obesity rates in the City.

Public Health Concern

- Overweight and obesity are associated with significant health risks.
- Population-level weight status is difficult to capture.
- The DOH has collaborated with the Missouri Department of Revenue to establish baseline overweight and obesity prevalence.

The City of St. Louis Department of Health (DOH) obtained and analyzed driver's license records (N = 171,894) from the DMV. From reported heights and weights, the DOH calculated adult body mass indexes to determine rates of adult overweight (BMI between 25 and 29.9) and obesity (BMI of 30 and above) rates throughout the City. BMI numbers were adjusted upward for self-report bias, based on recommendations found in the literature. Data was analyzed by a number of indicators including age, gender, and geography.

Overweight and obesity are major problems in the City of St. Louis. The majority of adults are above a healthy weight, placing them at risk for a number of adverse conditions. Geography is significantly correlated with overweight and obesity. Results suggest links between weight-status and socioeconomic indicators. Intergovernmental data sharing is a practical and low-cost surveillance method. As resources become increasingly scarce for local governments, interventions must target the neediest areas. Robust community data surveillance allows for effective evaluations to demonstrate effectiveness of interventions.

Major Findings

- The majority (60.9%) of City residents are overweight or obese; fewer than 2 in 5 (38.3%) are normal weight.
- Overweight and obesity rates are significantly associated with age; fewer than half (47.9%) of people under age 40 are overweight or obese compared to 70.4% of those over age 40.
- More men than women are overweight or obese (63% vs. 58.8%), but women have higher rates of obesity compared to men (28.6% vs. 25.2%).
- The highest rates of overweight and obesity are found in northern, primarily African American neighborhoods (see map on reverse side).



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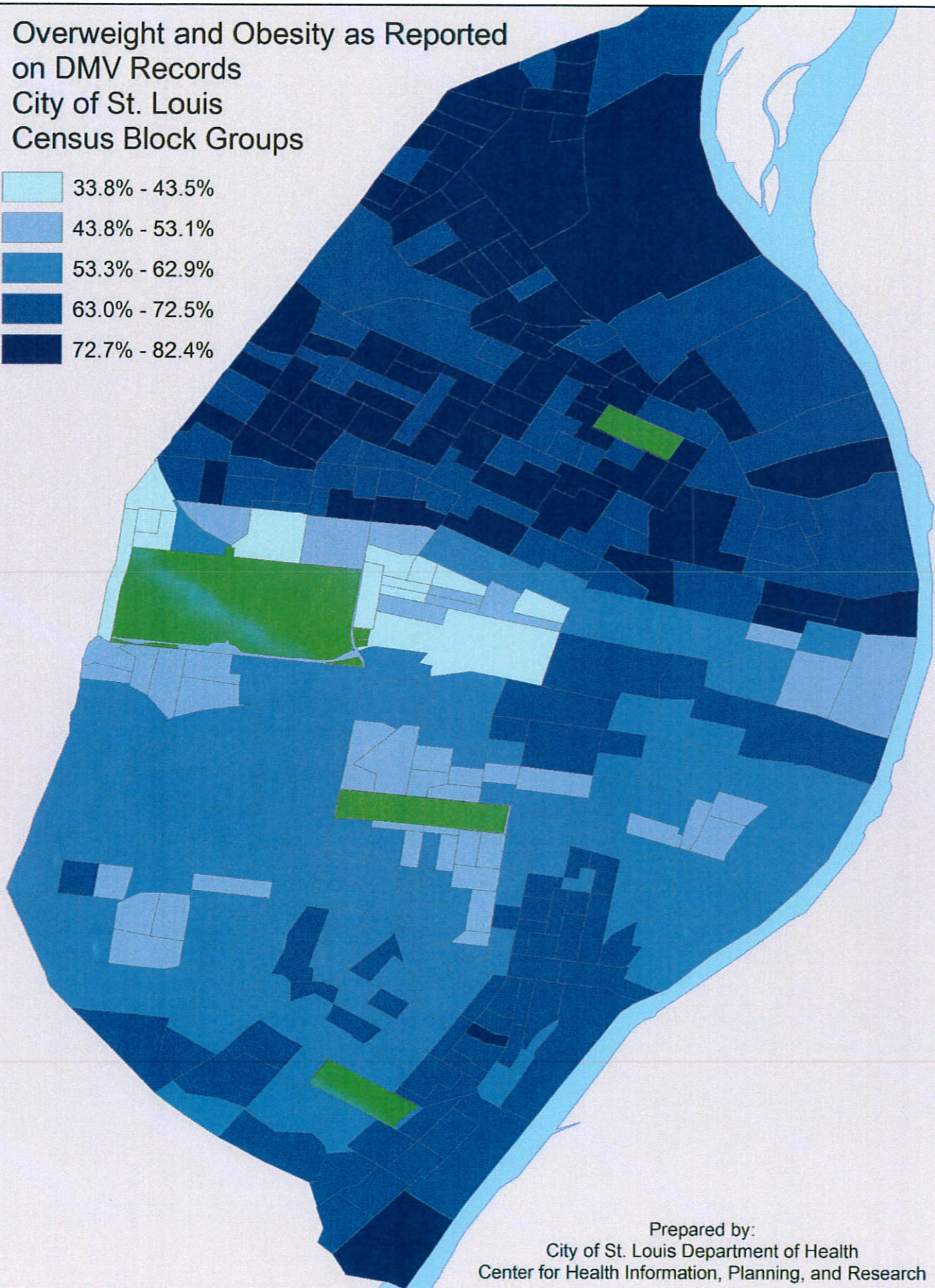
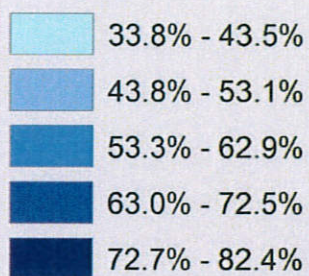
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Overweight and Obesity as Reported
on DMV Records
City of St. Louis
Census Block Groups



Prepared by:
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